

The Life of a Christian

Charles Mercer Hall



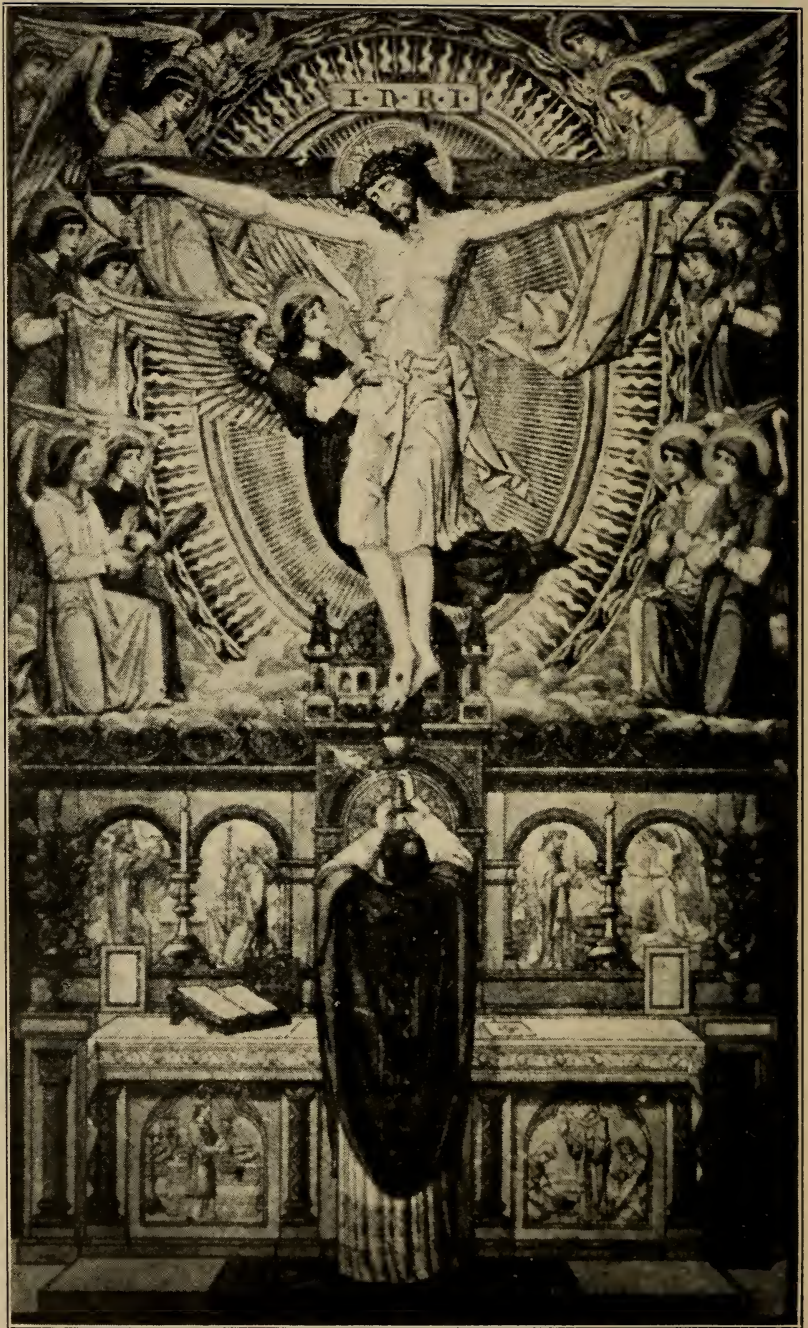
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THE LIFE OF A CHRISTIAN



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The Life of a Christian

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR SHORT STUDIES IN
THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

BY

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WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

THE BISHOP OF MILWAUKEE

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To
The Name
That is Above Every Name

PREFACE

THIS little book contains a series of short chapters on the spiritual life — the life of righteousness.

The *spiritual* life is the life of the soul, whether in the world or in the cloister. It is the real life of the Christian, the atmosphere in which he breathes. The *religious* life is, technically, the vocation of those who live in the cloister, under special vows.

As the artist needs a model for his ideal, and the implements of his craft ere he can work, so the Christian requires a model, an ideal, implements or means by which he may attain his end. He finds his Ideal in Jesus Christ, his model in the life of the

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Sacred Humanity; his implements in the various sacraments and other means of grace provided in Holy Church; the power for all in the life of the living Christ. He must seek in order to find, he must lose himself to find himself. He must study the great Book of Life, the Cross. There is no short and easy road to heaven — the road is steep and the way is rough, but it is the way of our Lord—the way of the Holy Cross.

In these pages the writer has sought to set down what he hopes may help some traveller onward; as well as to make a humble offering to the library of devotional theology. The subjects have not been elaborated to any extent, as it is hoped they may be used as a basis for meditation and study.

HOLY CROSS RECTORY,
Kingston, New York, Lent, A.D. 1907.

INTRODUCTION

WE can never have too many good books dealing with the spiritual life, and I know of no book that exactly takes the place of *The Life of a Christian*. I hope, and do not doubt, that it will be helpful in instructing souls in the Faith and in leading them on in the spiritual life. In these days of unrest, anything that will strengthen one's hold on the Incarnation, and make one realize how one's whole spiritual life depends on a proper conception of the Faith once delivered to the Saints, should be helpful. This little book speaks with no uncertain voice; may it comfort and help many souls.

✠ WM. WALTER WEBB,
Bishop of Milwaukee.

The Purification of Saint Mary the Virgin, 1907.

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CHAPTER I

THE CROSS

God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord, Jesus Christ. GALATIANS VI, 14.

THE shadow of the Cross falls athwart every life. Our first cry is a cry of pain. As a little child totters towards you with its unsteady steps and outstretched arms, the shadow of the Cross goes before him. Suffering, sorrow, pain, sickness, death are ever present witnesses of the consequences of sin. To be a Christian, one must be willing to suffer, to bear. Jesus says, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.¹ The

¹ St. Luke ix, 23.

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imitation of Christ is no child's play. He who would be a disciple of Jesus must look forward to the time when he shall be conformed to His death. The fear of death is a natural impulse of the human heart. Death is always a strange mystery, that never loses one whit of its grim fascination. It is the loss of vitality. It is the wages of sin.

The Cross is spoken of as the Book of Life, the Mirror of the Christian, the Magnet — I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.¹ The Cross is the Throne of Mercy, the Witness of Love, the Measure of Sin, the Fountain of Merit, the Object of Desire, the Source of Compunction. God incarnate is the center of all things; so the Cross is the center of the universe. The world knows Jesus as an historic figure

¹ St. John xii, 32.

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of the centuries; we know Him as our Saviour and Friend, as “God in flesh made manifest.” The world looks upon the Cross as an ancient symbol of torture: we look upon it as a Tree of Glory, *Crux est mea Lux*. At the Cross we find our God, a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat.¹ Like mariners tossed about on the waves of this troublesome world, we yet behold the beacon of the Cross, from which the Light of the World calls the weary and heavy-laden to a harbour of safety — the haven where we would be.

Evil is a principle, the principle of variance and disobedience. Satan’s personality is that of a fallen angel — he is the prince of the power of the air.²

¹ Isaiah xxv, 4.

² Ephes. ii, 2.

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It is not easy to fight in the air. A great diabolical personality controls and directs the powers of darkness. The life of a Christian is one of warfare against the prince of darkness. Satan fears the Cross, and its adherents, for he knows that his time is now short, that the Cross is the symbol of his defeat, and of the overthrow of his power. We may not parley with him; he is our adversary, a liar and the father of lies.¹ In our daily struggle we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.² Those who live for self instead of God will learn that the wages of sin is death.³ In the warfare of life we must always

¹ St. John viii, 44.

² Ephesians vi, 12.

³ Romans vi, 23.

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be on guard, for our adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour.¹ The call to be a Christian is a call to battle against all that is opposed to *the Will of God*, and the Christian's battle-gauge is the Cross of Calvary. God created man to be immortal and made him to be an image of His own eternity. Nevertheless, through envy of the devil came death into the world.² By the death of the Cross, Jesus destroyed the power of death. He is perfect Man, the Conqueror riding on a white horse.³ In the Temptation and on the Cross, Satan sought in vain to overcome the unconquerable might of the Majestic Rider, unrecognized in the Person of the patient and gentle Man of

¹ St. Peter v, 8.

² Wisdom ii, 23, 24.

³ Rev. vi, 2.

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Nazareth. To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.¹

To seek spiritual things is to live the spiritual life — to live the life of Christ. That life is a pilgrimage, for in this world the Christian is a stranger in a strange land. Here we have no certain dwelling place:² Heaven is our home. To reach our journey's end we must go the way of the Holy Cross, and he who journeys faithfully shall find the comfort of that rod and staff a daily support.

Let us seek Him that turneth the shadow of death into the morning.³ For the faithful Christian, death need have no terror. It is the gate of life immortal. The trial or probation of

¹ Romans viii, 6.

² I Cor. iv, 11.

³ Amos v, 8.

THE CROSS

man, his time of labour and toil, ends when death comes; then the night cometh when no man can work.¹ Death is the penal consequence of sin; an experience of which we must each taste; but to a Christian in a state of grace it will be the portal of that habitation where true happiness and everlasting peace do dwell. We shall be changed, and in the resurrection, capable of existing in the life of the world to come. Identity, personality will remain, and we shall recognize those whom, —

“We have loved long since and lost awhile.”

In my flesh shall I see God,² and then shall I know even as also I am known.³ We shall be perfected, body and soul; the mysteries of the universe shall be

¹ St. John ix, 4.

² Job xix, 26.

³ Cor. xiii, 12.

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opened to us, and possessed of new powers, new knowledge, new joys, we shall enjoy forever the full revelation of the glory of God.

CHAPTER II

THE WAY OF FAITH

The door of faith. ACTS xiv, 27.

THE creation of man was the crowning act of God's work. Man is made of body and soul. The soul is the medium between the spirit and the flesh, between which there was no proper communion before this divine inspiration. Thus the soul is the meeting-point of man's higher and lower natures, the battle-ground in which take place the daily conflicts between flesh and spirit. The soul is immortal. It came forth from the hand of God — "a thought of God expressed in time" — to exist forever.

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Life can only come from life. So God said, Let us make man in Our own image.¹ Then the Lord God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.²

We were made to know, to love, and to serve God and to be the objects of his love. The soul came forth from God endowed with intelligence, affections, senses, activities, and conscience: intelligence that we might know Him, affections with which to love Him, senses to feel after Him, activities to serve Him, and conscience to respond to His judgments.

Faith is both moral and dogmatic. So we say in the creeds, I believe *in* the Holy Catholic Church, and, I *believe* one Catholic and Apostolic Church.

¹ Genesis i, 26.

² Genesis xi, 7.

THE WAY OF FAITH

And no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.¹ The will to believe is a gift of grace. So *Faith is one of the three fundamental theological virtues* imparted to the soul in Holy Baptism, it is a gift of the Holy Spirit. Baptism has been called the Sacrament of Illumination.

In Eden our first parents yielded to temptation and disobeyed God. So sin came into the world. Sin is disobedience — a definition the youngest child can soon understand. In the body we have *sense-consciousness*, in the soul *self-consciousness*, in the spirit *God-consciousness*. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life were all active in the first sin. The divine gift of curiosity was prostituted by Eve. Then when man had

¹ 1 Cor. xii, 3.

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sinned, he lost his innocence and shame came into his knowledge. Sickness, sorrow, and death followed the first act of sin; the body became liable to disease and pain; man's will became turned from God; the mind became darkened and blighted, so that thenceforth he could not see clearly between right and wrong; and the affections, which before had been pure, became passionate and stormy.

In Adam's sin there was *a real Fall* from original righteousness, and man became instantly separated from God. The original sin was Adam's. He, not Eve, was the head of the human race. Beware of the first sin.

“Acts make habits and habits make character.” A habit of sin will lead to separation from God; and final separation from God — the possible choice

THE WAY OF FAITH

of a creature endowed with free-will — results in hell. By one act of disobedience Adam lost for himself and all his sons peace, tranquillity, and enjoyment. Fear, anxiety, remorse took their place. Conscious of shame, Adam and Eve felt unfit even to be seen by God; just as does, to-day, a soul under the ban of mortal sin. Then there crept into their hearts a dread of God and a desire to escape from His Presence. A new sense awakened within them, the sense of guilt. Charged with their sin they offered futile excuses; they showed no sign of sorrow. Already their character had become depraved, their hearts hardened, and they were hostile to God. Then their fallen nature was transmitted to the sons of Adam for all time. Man had by sin marred God's beautiful work. So the

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Church tells us that all men are conceived and born in sin, and they who are in the flesh cannot please God, but live in sin, committing many actual transgressions.¹

But God loved the world He had made. At length He sent his only-begotten Son to redeem man. *God became Man.* THE MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION is, that God the Son was made Man for us. THE MYSTERY OF THE REDEMPTION is, that God the Son suffered and died for us. THE MYSTERY OF THE HOLY TRINITY is that there are three Persons in one God. Here is a revelation of divine love, mercy, and forbearance. On these three basic mysteries the economy of the Catholic Religion is formulated. God's way to save a fallen race was

¹ Baptismal Office.

THE WAY OF FAITH

by the Divine Humiliation: He willed to take human nature into union with the divine. So Jesus Christ the Son of God and Blessed Mary Ever-Virgin, became the Fountain of Life, the second Adam.

As we have already seen, Faith enables us to believe in God. It is not strange that the unbaptized do not know God supernaturally. Natural man has the capacity; regenerated he has the power. Unregenerate, like the Greeks, he can only say, we would see Jesus.¹ Born again, his spiritual eyes will open and his vision will expand, as the rays of the Sun of Righteousness are diffused within his redeemed soul, till at length he may, if he will, grow to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, that he may win Christ and be found

¹ St. John xii, 21.

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in Him, not having his own righteousness, but the righteousness which is of God by faith, and know Him and the power of His resurrection.¹ The Christian learns to say with advancing years, as faith grows strong, I know Him whom I have believed.² Faith knows no word impossible. We walk by faith, not by sight.³ Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed.⁴

The revealed Faith is also a sacred trust. The facts of revelation can never change or cease to be. Faith has nothing to fear from the discoveries of true science, or the reverent treatment of Holy Scripture by holy critics in the interest of accuracy. The Church is the guardian of the Faith, the keeper of the Word, the pillar and

¹ Philippians iii, 8-10.

³ 2 Cor. v, 7.

² 2 St. Timothy i, 12.

⁴ St. John xxi, 29.

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ground of the Truth, the teacher of Morals, the dispenser of Grace. For scholars she is God's university, for simple disciples she is a safe home, for the timorous she is an ark of safety, for questioners she has the only certain answers. If every word and letter of Holy Scripture were swept away by criticism, the indefectible Church would still be the living Witness of our Faith. Let us trust her always; so shall we come to perfect agreement in the faith and knowledge of God, and to that ripeness and perfectness of age in Christ, so that there shall be no place either for error in religion or for viciousness in life.¹

My God, I believe in Thee and all Thy Church doth teach, because Thou hast said it and Thy word is true.

Lord, increase our faith.²

¹ See Ordinal.

² St. Luke xvii, 5.

CHAPTER III

THE WAY OF HOPE

In hope of eternal life. TITUS i, 2.

WITHOUT hope, life would be unendurable. *Hope is the second of the theological virtues.* Hope is the virtue which enables us to desire God. Hungry and thirsty for the life of the spirit, hope cries out within us, My soul is athirst for God.¹ If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.² Hope is desire sanctified. A Christian's hope is high and holy trust; one of the three ways by which the soul knows God. Hope encourages and stimulates, it is

¹ Psalm xlii, 12.

² Romans viii, 25.

THE WAY OF HOPE

the spur to all activity. It is a means of strength to our weakened will. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord and whose hope the Lord is.¹ Hope is for this life; hereafter it shall be lost in sight. Here, hope, like aspiration, is practically boundless. We are ever hoping for the realization of our Ideal. We are to be like those who against hope believe in hope.² We are to plow the furrows of life in hope. Hope makes courageous Christians. Pressing onward we are to hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ.³ We must never doubt the good-will of God towards us. We are the objects of his constant love. Are we sinners? Even so, while we were yet

¹ Jer. xvii, 7.

² Romans iv, 18.

³ 1 Peter i, 13.

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sinner Christ died for us.¹ He came to call sinners to repentance.² Hope is the best antidote for despair. Despair is the result of remorse. Judas lost hope after he betrayed his Lord. Hope springs eternal in the heart of the contrite sinner. Saint Peter, converted, strengthens his brethren and is at last bidden to care for Christ's lambs. The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope for His mercy.³ God is Law as well as Love, Justice as well as Mercy. We must fear Him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell.⁴ Hope is the anchor of our sure confidence.

Yet we must not presume. Presumption is a sin against the Holy Ghost. God will not do all; we must

¹ Romans v, 8.

³ Psalm cxlvii, 11.

² St. Mark ii, 17.

⁴ St. Matt. x, 28.

THE WAY OF HOPE

ourselves work while it is day.¹ We cannot do without God. We cannot live without grace. Grace is the free gift of God and it is given with a lavish hand, enough for every need. Jesus said to S. Paul, My grace is sufficient for thee.² It is sufficient, but for efficacy requires the action of the human will. I can do all things through Christ Who strengtheneth me.³ At least effort is required of us.

My God, I hope in Thee for grace and for glory, because of Thy promises, Thy mercy and thy power.

¹ St. John ix, 4.

² 2 Cor. xii, 9.

³ Phil. iv, 13.

CHAPTER IV

THE WAY OF LOVE

The love of Christ constraineth us. 2 COR. V, 14.

WE were made to know God, to love Him, to serve Him, and to be the objects of His love. *Love or charity is that virtue whereby we love God and all men in Him.* Charity is a Christian word. Love, too, is the first and great commandment, at once the simplest and most arduous to perform. The primitive meaning of *El* — God, is **THE GOAL**. We are and through all eternity have been the object of the love of God. We were made to love Him; to fully realize that love is the destiny of a Christian. The fear of Hell—final and

THE WAY OF LOVE

eternal separation from God; of the loss of Heaven; of failure to reach the goal, may produce in us *attrition* — a certain imperfect sorrow which arises from such fears. But the love of Christ constraineth us.¹ We love Him because He first loved us.² While we were yet sinners Christ died for us.³ Love forms *contrition* — the sorrow for love's sake. It can only be perfect when, as we think upon God's great love for us and the outrage to that love which our sin has caused, we say daily with David, My sin is ever before me.⁴ Contrition is penitence that is lifelong and unceasing.

The Bible is full of divine intensities, as in it we read of the love of God. We read of the marvellous loving-kindness of the Lord, of His tender mercies, of

¹ I Cor. ii, 9.

³ St. Matt. ii, 28.

² I St. John iv, 19.

⁴ Psalm li, 3.

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His plenteous redemption. We are lost in infinity as we hear, God *so* loved the world.¹ The love of God for man is no new thing, it is from everlasting to everlasting. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.² When the Pilgrim arrives at his journey's end, there await him delights and pleasures of unimagined beauty and loveliness. The pleasures of sense, of this world, entice with siren voices. But the voice of the Beloved calls us in tones of melody surpassing all created loveliness, Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.³ Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you

¹ St. John iii, 16.

² I Cor. ii, 9.

³ I St. John ii, 15.

THE WAY OF LOVE

rest.¹ All who respond to that invitation find what they are seeking. The broken-hearted, the bruised, the desolate, the mourning; all who will, shall receive the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.²

Love is the most wonderful thing in time or in eternity. Jesus is the revelation of the Father's love for a fallen race. He would draw us with the cords of a man. It is with an almost passionate ecstasy of longing that he who calls himself less than the least of all saints³ exclaims, I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened

¹ St. Matt. xi, 28.

² Isaiah lxi, 2.

³ Eph. iii, 8.

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with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.¹

In no human language can we express the love of God — it passeth knowledge. We know of great human loves, such as that of David and Jonathan — passing the love of women;² of Jacob for Rachel. But the tongue cannot tell, even in its most rapturous speech, of the love of the Sacred Heart. Jesus is the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valleys. He belongs to us and He desires our love. Let us say, The voice

¹ Eph. iii, 14-19.

² 2 Sam. i, 26.

THE WAY OF LOVE

of my Beloved calls me. O my Dove that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see Thy countenance, let me hear Thy voice.¹ I will rise now and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek Him whom my soul loveth;² until the day break and the shadows flee away.³ Such must be the quest of every soul — the Face of Jesus Christ.⁴

Many have found themselves by losing themselves in the Divine Ideal. In every century since time has been recorded by the years of our Lord, men, women and children have known the love of God and have lived for it, and died for it; have done what they could, giving even of their penury in tender

¹ Canticles ii.

² Canticles iii, 2.

³ Ibid. ii, 17.

⁴ 2 Cor. iv, 6.

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gratitude. There is holy ground in every country where the Cross of Christ has been uplifted, and the blood of martyrs has been sown like seed in every land. Palestine and Rome, India and the Isles of the sea, Africa and Britain, China, Japan and America, have made their glad tribute — have made, and must still offer, sacrifice. The love of the Crucified has transformed the world. The Sign of the Cross has been marked on the doorposts of every nation. No story to-day enthralls men as does the story of the Passion. Why? It is the story of deathless love. Pain and Suffering and Poverty have become sacramental.

My God, because Thou art so good, I love Thee with my whole heart, and for Thy sake, I love my neighbour as myself.

CHAPTER V

THE WAY OF PRAYER — PRIVATE

Pray without ceasing. 1 THESS. v, 17.

PRAYER is hard work, a golden stair indeed, but its heights are steep. Prayer is communion with the Infinite; so men to-day may talk and walk with God. In prayer, in the visions of the night, men as they pray gain strength, and the eye of faith discerns the immortal glory —

“The light that never shone on land or sea.”

The atmosphere of prayer is the mantle of the Deity; it is sweet with the fragrance of the

“Lilies of eternal peace.”

.

“Joys that will not cease,”—

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joys that no man can take away, await those who seek the Face of Jesus Christ. Seek ye My Face; Thy Face, Lord, will I seek.¹

Prayer may be private or public, vocal or mental. Prayer may take the form of thanksgiving or eucharistic, adoration, praise, intercession, supplication and contemplation. Prayer means a whisper, an entreaty, "to strike against," to bend, to bow down, to meditate, to ask, a song of praise, a pouring out. So, if we knock, Heaven itself shall be opened to us. Men prayed long before God let Solomon build Him an house. Abraham prayed to God habitually. Moses prayed; so did Hannah when she said, My heart rejoiceth in the Lord;² so did David, and Solomon and Elisha, and Daniel

¹ Psalm xxvii, 8.

² 1 Sam. ii, 1.

THE WAY OF PRAYER, PRIVATE

at the same time confessing his sin.¹ Our Lord prayed constantly and He was urgent in His injunctions and directions about the way to pray; after this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father, etc.;² watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation;³ when ye pray believe that ye receive.⁴ He prayed to His Father to glorify Him, to preserve His apostles in unity and truth, and to glorify them and all other believers in heaven.⁵ With Christians, from the beginning, Prayer has been a habit. *Prayer reconciles us to the Will of God.* The spirit of all prayer must be a willingness and desire to be conformed to the Will of God. Prayer is not prayer if it does not contain

¹ Dan. ix, 20.

³ St. Matt. xxvi, 41.

² St. Matt. vi, 19.

⁴ St. Mark xi, 24.

⁵ St. John xvii, 1.

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that implication. We learn God's Will through prayer; so we come to understand Him and ourselves. Prayer opens the gates of Heaven to us, by it we come to a better knowledge of spiritual things. It is the deepest expression of the soul's personal relationship with God. We have to lose ourselves in prayer to find God. In the secret of His Presence He hides us. Prayer should be a habit with us. To remember always that we are in God's Presence is the spirit of recollection, the spirit of prayer. To understand this better one might read Brother Lawrence's PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD. Wandering thoughts in prayer interfere with, but do not hinder *essential* devotion, that is, prayer offered to God with a devout will. Any feeling of emotion or ecstasy is not necessary.

THE WAY OF PRAYER, PRIVATE

When such feelings accompany prayer — perhaps at rare intervals — they only certify us as to the reality of the Invisible; then our *essential* devotion becomes what spiritual writers call *accidental*. We must pray whether we *feel* it or not. It is God the Holy Ghost, praying within us, who makes our prayers, often so unsatisfactory and incomplete, effective. The Holy Ghost is the Divine Wind blowing across the æolian harp of the human soul. Many sweet chords have come from prayers of saints. So prayer becomes perfect when the realization comes to us that —

“Love took up the harp of life,
Smote on all its chords with might,
Smote the chord of self which — sighing,
Passed in music out of sight.”

Supplication is prayer for oneself.

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Let my supplication come before Thee: deliver me according to Thy word.¹

Intercession is prayer for others, a common every-day duty; the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends. We ourselves gain by praying for others.

Thanksgiving finds its highest expression in the Holy Eucharist, when we offer up to the Eternal Father our heartfelt gratitude for his mercies that are new every morning. With many the Eucharist is not only a weekly, but a daily, thanksgiving. At more than one hundred and forty altars in the American Church is the Holy Sacrifice offered every day.

Adoration is that act by which we pay divine honour to the Infinite Being of God; it is that supreme worship

¹ Psalm cxix, 170.

THE WAY OF PRAYER, PRIVATE

called in the Greek *latría*, which may not be paid to any creature under pain of idolatry. Knowledge by which God enables us to distinguish between good and evil is the fire of adoration; adoration is the gate of knowledge.

Praise is the mode by which we laud and magnify the glorious Name of God: the glad expression of love and gratitude for benefits received, our tribute of grateful homage to the ever-living Deity —

“Love delights in praises.”

He is thy praise and he is thy God.¹ In all these ways may we pray.

Meditation is another form of prayer and is, for many, a difficult exercise.² To pray well one must pray in his own way, apart from the exercises of stated morning and evening prayers

¹ Deut. x, 21.

² 1 Tim. iv, 15.

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and participating in public services. Meditation exercises the spiritual faculties of the mind. Its highest form, which few realize well, is contemplation. Beginners often find help in using one of the many books of Meditations. But the spirit of meditation is, *What does God want to say to my soul, now?* Sometimes the mind is active, sometimes quiescent, and sometimes the only apparant result is the peace gained by a withdrawal from the world for the fifteen minutes or half hours given to this exercise. Yet that is a distinct blessing. Those who meditate — and all should sometimes make the effort — will certainly know more of the mind of Christ. Continued effort is never fruitless, and sometimes such effort results in the reaping of a golden reward.

CHAPTER VI

THE WAY OF PRAYER — PUBLIC

No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me. ST. JOHN xiv, 6.

NO amount of private prayer in one's closet can relieve a Christian of his duty with regard to his attendance upon the public services of the Church. Nor does attendance at Morning or Evening Prayer ever discharge one from the supreme duty of a Christian on the Lord's Day — ATTENDANCE AT THE SERVICE OF THE HOLY COMMUNION. "The Mass is the thing."¹ The service which is the

¹ Attributed to Mr. Gladstone.

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brightest jewel of our Prayer Book is "The Lord's Own Service on the Lord's Own Day." The history of Matins and Evensong, beautiful offices that they are, teaches us that they are abbreviations of the old monastic offices, and that they are but the processional and retrocessional of the majestic service of the Altar. This is evident to even a superficial observer, upon the most casual glance at the order of the Prayer Book services. The secular days of the month have their appointed portions of the Psalter. The frequent and systematic reading of God's Holy Word cannot be too strongly urged. But the weekly memorial of the Sacrifice of Calvary follows the perfect order of the Christian Year with its Collect, Epistle, and Gospel, proper to each Sunday and Holy Day. This shows us the mind of

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the Church. As Canon Liddon says: "A Christian of the first or second century would not have understood a Sunday in which, whatever else might be done, the Holy Communion was omitted; and this great duty is best complied with as early as possible in the day, when the natural powers of the mind have been lately refreshed by sleep, when as yet the world has not taken off the bloom of the soul's first self-dedication to God, when thought and feeling and purpose are still bright and fresh and unembarrassed; then is the time, for those who would reap the full harvest of grace, to approach the altar. It is quite a different thing in the middle of the day even when serious efforts are made to communicate reverently. Those who begin their Sundays with the Holy Communion know

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one of the deepest meanings of that promise, those that seek me early shall find me.”¹ Yet worship is a lost art with many.

As long ago as 1841, Mr. Gladstone wrote to a Liverpool clergyman — “The greatest object of all appears to me to be the re-establishment of the Eucharist in its proper and Scriptural place as the central act of at least our weekly worship.”² So, the most serious form of Sabbath-breaking for a Christian is absenting oneself from attendance at the Mass on Sunday. Being *present* is the primary duty of the day. Then we can at least worship our dear Lord present in the Sacrament of His love. The spirit of the Fourth Commandment is transgressed when-

¹ Prov. viii, 17.

² The Household of Faith, p. 13.

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ever, without sufficient cause, we fail to assist at this most important public service. Attendance at Morning and Evening Prayer is entirely a secondary duty. For this reason in many parishes the parish priest provides for the offering of the Holy Sacrifice at midday as well as early in the morning, so that the blame of non-attendance may not rest on him. With the religious evolution going on to-day it is quite probable that, in a few years' time, there will be but one Mass on Sunday where there is but one priest, and at an hour not later than nine or half-past nine. Non-communicating attendance has been a necessity of the stress of the past generation, but it is a means to an end. But non-communicating attendance is far better than non-attendance, and children should be sent to this

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morning service every Lord's Day to be taught how to worship. It is a radical mistake to make Catechism or Sunday School a substitute for Church attendance; children ought to be taught how to worship, in their Father's House.

CHAPTER VII

THE WAY OF THE SACRAMENTS

The mysteries of God. 2 COR. iv, 1.

A SACRAMENT is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ Himself, as a means whereby we receive the same and a pledge to assure us thereof.¹ Sacraments are not magical but mystical, and their number is the mystical number, seven. The life of a Christian ought to be a sacramental life to be a truly evangelical and Catholic Life. Sacraments are necessary means of grace where they may be had; they are the ways by

¹ See Catechism.

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which God chooses to impart to his children supernatural life, food, and medicine; the sources of energy in the life of the spirit, each sacrament having an efficacy of its own. This does not deny that the grace of God overflows and transcends sacramental means, at times, at His Will.

The Church is a mother who would care for the children of God from the cradle to the grave, and is the dispenser of these sacraments. The sacramental life insures to the faithful, persevering Christian pilgrim the possession of the life of the world to come. There is no doubt about this. It is a most certain fact of revealed religion, an assurance of the Catholic Faith. Sacraments are the means by which the natural man is transformed into the supernatural.

The Sacraments are for all sorts and

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conditions of men, and confer grace for every vocation and for every need of man's spiritual nature.

Holy Baptism is the Sacrament by which a soul is born again into the Kingdom of God.¹ It restores to man the sanctifying grace he lost by the Fall. By it he is made a member of Christ, the child of God and an inheritor of the Kingdom of heaven; by it the soul is purified and beautified. It is the Sacrament of Initiation into the communion of the Church Catholic. All persons by whomsoever properly baptized with water, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, are incorporated into the one Church of God; become entitled to all the privileges of such membership and to participate in all the good works

¹ St. John iii, 5.

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and merits of the whole Church. Baptism is the door of entrance. There is but one Baptism for the remission of sins. In Baptism Original Sin is remitted as well as all actual sins, mortal and venial. It is the sacrament that confers *the Christian character*, and cannot be repeated. Faith, Hope, and Charity became our companions from the moment of baptism, that is, we then receive the power to exercise them as well as the Cardinal Virtues, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The HOLY EUCHARIST is called in the Prayer Book the Blessed Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ. It is the Most Holy Sacrament. It is the great act of thanksgiving and intercession, offered to the Eternal Father for us by our Eternal High Priest. In passing, it may be noted that in the

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Holy Scripture the Holy Communion is never called the Lord's Supper, nor is the Lord's Day anywhere called the Sabbath. The name *Eucharist* has been common to all ages, and *Mass*, which is a convenient word, was retained by the reformers, in the first translation of the English Prayer Book, as the name by which the service of the altar was commonly or generally called. The Holy Sacrament of the Altar was instituted by our Lord on the night before He suffered,¹ for a continual remembrance of His Death.

The Western Church has always used wine — the fermented juice of the grape — and unleavened bread almost invariably. These form the *matter* of the sacrament. Unfermented grape juice is neither scriptural, nor is it proper *mat-*

¹ St. Luke xxii.

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ter. The words of institution, This is My Body, and, This is My Blood, are the essential *form*. When the words of consecration are said by the priest, the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ Who becomes really present in this adorable sacrament, Wherever Christ is, He is to be adored, says Jeremy Taylor. Adoration is inseparable from the doctrine of the Real Presence, and this doctrine has been taught by the Church from the beginning. Saint Augustine says, No man eateth that Flesh unless he hath first adored. In the Eucharist we receive the Glorified Humanity of our divine Lord: again, as saith Augustine, we do visibly press with our teeth the sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, yet we receive that sacrament after an heavenly and spiritual manner, as the

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Catechism tells us. Nothing is to be gained by a timid teaching of this doctrine. We cannot understand it but we believe it. Where is the Christian who would refuse to adore his God wherever He is?

The Real Presence is a mystery, the mystery of mysteries, but it is a fact. The Holy Eucharist is a representation of the Sacrifice of Calvary, but Christ is not immolated again at each offering. Christ in the sacrament is our sin-offering,¹ our burnt-offering,² and our thank-offering:³ He is our peace.⁴ In every Mass this spiritual sacrifice is again offered to the Eternal Father for His glory, for the salvation of souls and for the sanctification of His chosen ones. It is our continual remembrance

¹ Lev. iii, 6. Ibid. viii, 17.

³ Lev. iv, 26.

² Ephes. ii, 14.

⁴ Gen. xxiii, 2.

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of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and of the benefits which we receive thereby. The benefits to the recipient are the strengthening and refreshing of the soul.¹ We taste and see how gracious the Lord is.² We eat this heavenly Manna, we drink of the sacred chalice of the Precious Blood and live forever. It is the food of immortality. Every good Communion unites us closer to Jesus, for we receive the Communion of the Body of Christ.³ If we are in a state of grace we can hardly go too often to receive this holy sacrament which protects and fortifies us. "Hearing Mass," is by no means enough, albeit a weekly duty. But we need to remember, as we are told in the Book of Homilies, that The Holy Eucharist

¹ Vide Catechism.

² Psalm xxxiv, 8.

³ 1 Cor. x, 16.

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is the salve of immortality and the sovereign preservative against Death; a deifical Communion, the sweet dainties of our Saviour, the pledge of eternal health, the defence of faith, the hope of the Resurrection, the food of immortality, the healthful grace, and the conservatory to everlasting life.

O Sacred Banquet, in which Christ is received, the memory of His passion renewed, the mind fulfilled with Grace, and a Pledge of future Glory given unto us.

Early and Fasting Communion are customs that have come down to us from primitive times, and these customs have never been wholly abandoned in our communion, DEO GRATIAS. Evening Communions now are almost unheard of, and are sad reminders of some of the deteriorating influences of

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three hundred years ago. To be primitive we must receive the Blessed Sacrament early, or at least fasting, that is, before any other food or drink has been taken. How can one conscientiously offer his body as a "reasonable sacrifice" at twelve o'clock noon, after he has had a hearty breakfast, read the Sunday newspaper, and then, the day nearly half over, gone to church to attend the Divine Mysteries? A Catholic Christian is bound to come to the altar fasting. It is a humble tribute of reverence and may often have a real element of sacrifice in it. It is the requirement of an obedient spirit.

To such as have this obedient spirit, Fasting Communion is a law. At least it is *an universal custom and of remote antiquity*, and has never been abandoned by either of our sister com-

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munions. Why should we abandon it? From henceforward make your communions fasting as an act of love, and of reparation for the many insults offered to our Lord in His most holy sacrament by the ignorant and profane.

Jeremy Taylor of pious memory says that “it is a Catholic custom that they, who receive the Holy Communion, should receive it fasting. This is not a duty commanded by God, but unless it be necessary to eat,¹ he that despises the custom, gives nothing but the testimony of an evil mind.”²

¹ *E.g.*, the Viaticum might have to be given in extremis after the fast had been broken.

² (*Ductor Dubitantium*, Book iii, ch. iv. rule xv).

CHAPTER VIII

THE WAY OF THE SACRAMENTS. (2)

CONFIRMATION is the Sacrament of Warriors, *i.e.*, it confers upon the Christian child, arrived at the age of responsibility, *the character of a SOLDIER* of Jesus Christ. It represents the second stage of our progress. In Confirmation we receive the armour and weapons for the warfare of the Christian life — the special protection and aid of God the Holy Ghost. We are born of water and the Holy Ghost in Baptism, but Confirmation stirs up the grace of God which is in us, now poured upon us in sevenfold plenitude and power. As *the character of the child of God* is stamped upon the soul indelibly in Baptism, in Confirma-

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tion we are sealed or stamped with *the character of the Holy Spirit*: having arrived at a certain maturity we become soldiers of Christ.

In Confirmation sanctifying grace is increased in the soul. It is conferred upon us, or should be, as soon as we can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and are sufficiently instructed in the other parts of the Church Catechism. Prayer Book Christians should aim to obey the Prayer Book. The rubric requires that the child baptized shall be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed, so soon as these simple rules of faith are learned, and sponsors should take care that the rubric is obeyed.

We have further on devoted three chapters to PENANCE. Confession is the lesser part of this sacrament because it

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is man's part. The wonderful part of the sacrament is Absolution, and that is God's part. Every time absolution is pronounced, the Precious Blood is sprinkled¹ upon the soul of the penitent, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.² Be convinced of this great truth and you will eagerly avail yourself of this means of grace, by which your soul may be healed of the wounds made by sin.

HOLY ORDER is the sacrament by which men are ordered, ordained, and consecrated to the ministerial office of deacon, priest, and bishop. It is the only means by which men can receive valid ordination to the apostolic ministry in the Church of God. The Catholic Church is a DIVINE ORGANISM, and not a voluntary association or organiza-

¹ Heb. xii, 24.

² 1 St. John i, 7

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tion of persons, who are trying to maintain the Kingdom of God by what they call the continuity of the Christian life.

The MINISTRY of the Catholic Church alone, is a ministry possessing divine authority and supernatural powers, the latter resulting from the former. Every man ordained to the sacred priesthood receives a share in the Eternal Priesthood of Jesus Christ,¹ and is thereby possessed of the power to consecrate the Holy Eucharist,² to absolve sinners,³ and to administer all the sacraments, except Confirmation and Holy Order which, in our Communion, are reserved to the Episcopate—as well as to preach the everlasting gospel and to teach.⁴ The Western Church teaches that Holy Order is indelible. Once a priest always

¹ Heb. vii, 14.

³ St. John xxi, 22, 23.

² St. Luke xxii, 19.

⁴ St. Matt. xxviii, 18–20.

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a priest. "No Church without a bishop," is an old maxim. The episcopate includes the fulness of the priesthood and is necessary for the conferring of the sacerdotal office. Mission and jurisdiction are powers which can only be transmitted by the episcopate.

To preach one must be sent.¹ Men have a right to ask, By what authority doest thou these things? for the Priesthood of our Lord is of such authority and honour, that no man taketh this honour unto himself but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.² The apostolic ministry presents the only sound platform as a basis of true Christian Unity. There can be no true unity without it. All efforts towards it, that would minimize its essential character, will be futile. The preface to the

¹ Rom. x, 15.

² Heb. v, 4.

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Ordinal on page 546 of the Prayer Book should be read frequently, on one's knees. The bishop says to the deacon about to be advanced to the priesthood—"Have always therefore printed in your remembrance, how great a treasure is committed to your charge." Have a special reverence for the ministers of Jesus Christ. Some say this old-fashioned reverence is dying out. Revive it. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief.¹ Like priest, like people: like people, like priest.² Who is sufficient for these things?³ A priest is a messenger, a watchman, a steward, a teacher, a pro-

¹ Heb. xiii, 17.

² Isaiah xxiv, 2.

³ 2 Cor. ii, 16.

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vider, a father, a servant.¹ Take heed how ye hear.²

HOLY MATRIMONY is a sacrament which sanctifies a matter of common, ordinary life, for those who have a vocation to the married state. Marriage is an honourable estate, instituted of God in the time of man's innocency, signifying unto us the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and His Church. Being *a sacrament of the living* it may not be given to an unbaptized person — a blessing cannot be given to anything dead. Nor is it to be given to any within the prohibited degrees; neither is it for the divorced, "Once married, married until death." Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder, is the warning of the

¹ Ezek. xxxiii, 7-9.

² St. Luke viii, 18

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Church.¹ The blessing of the Church raises marriage to a supernatural level. Marriage was ordained for the procreation of children. Holy Matrimony reminds us that they are to be brought up for God. Further, marriage was ordained for a remedy against sin and to avoid fornication. But even the married may, nay, must be continent. And, again, holy matrimony was ordained for the mutual society, help, and comfort that the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity.² As regards the marriage contract, man and woman are by the gospel placed on an equal footing. The position of a wife and mother is one of great dignity and sacredness. Marriage is a high and holy state. In it a

¹ Vide Prayer-Book.

² See English Prayer Book for these three reasons.

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man and woman may fulfil their true vocation. Christ adorned and beautified by His presence the marriage at Cana, and there He performed His first miracle. Mutual consent forms the marriage bond, and the ministers of Holy Matrimony are the man and the woman. Contentment, mutual love, and forbearance are some of the secrets of a happy married life. Men are to love their wives as their own bodies:¹ a wife is to reverence her husband.² Divine grace, conferred at the time of marriage, will enable a man and his wife faithfully to keep the marriage vow. It is a vow to be taken reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God. "Sacrifice alone is fruitful," says Lammenais. In the married

¹ Ephes. v, 28.

² Ibid. v, 33,

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state a man and his wife will have daily opportunity to learn the truth of this wise saying.

A Christian home is always a haven for good. It is one of the surest safeguards of society. It should be a picture to the world of temperance, soberness, and chastity. A life begun together at the altar in the quiet of the morning, hallowed by the nuptial mass, should be a happy life indeed. Happy in spite of adversity, and sorrow, and hardship, because of that inseparable bond which is likened in Holy Writ to the union that is betwixt Christ and His church.¹ The married life at its best will teach the ultimate secret which God reveals to His chosen ones — the secret of living not for self but for another.

¹ Ephes. v, 32.

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The general restoration of the ancient custom of Anointing the Sick,¹ with the prayer of faith — or EXTREME UNCTION (so-called from this being the last sacrament to be administered with unction or the use of oil), would be the best answer the Church could give to that modern and dangerous deceit by which so many souls have been hurt, perhaps mortally — un-Christian Science. It is curious how Anglo-Saxons pride themselves on their prejudices and how they think they dislike names and things with which they have lost familiarity — for three hundred years, *e.g.*, the Mass, Extreme Unction, and Incense.

Those who have witnessed the administration of this sacrament will never forget the impression they re-

¹ St. James v, 14, 15.

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ceived of its deep solemnity. While not having a special office in our Prayer Book, holy oil is blessed by many bishops, and the use of this sacrament in cases of dangerous sickness is gradually being restored.

The prayer of faith, with the use of this sacrament, shall save the sick. It may save the body to a longer life in this world. It does strengthen the soul with all graces needed at the hour of death. It gives to the soul fortitude and resignation, courage, strength and confidence, and peacefulness. It delivers from the remains of our sins. It is a most merciful sacrament, for it may be given even to an unconscious soul, as the seal of God's pardon — if he have committed sins they shall be forgiven him.¹ Do your part in restor-

¹ St. James v, 15.

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ing this sacrament to its proper place and dignity.

In times of danger or impending peril in the sick-room ask for Holy Unction as naturally as you ask for the Bread of Life. It is your right. It is a means of grace. It was instituted for your health and comfort, both of body and soul. When you are sick send for the elders of the Church.

Bishop Churton of Nassau says very succinctly: "There seems no reason why we should not gradually accustom our people to this also, and so wipe off even that last surviving reproach — a neglect which has been inexcusable; or for which the only excuse was the complete oblivion which so long enveloped the practice."

CHAPTER IX

THE WAY OF PENITENCE

All have sinned. ROM. iii, 23.

ALL have missed the mark. A Christian's life should be one of sustained effort, of pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.¹ God is the Christian's goal. The law of God is our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ.² We had not known sin but by the law.³ So sin is the transgression of the law — disobedience. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.⁴ It is the essential glory

¹ Philip iii, 14.

³ Rom. vii, 17.

² Gal. iii, 24.

⁴ Rom. iii, 23.

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of the Blessed Trinity that each Person of the Godhead is known and appreciated and valued thoroughly, and so is praised and glorified adequately and infinitely. God receives the perfect worship of all the heavenly hierarchies. If we are living the life of Christ, we are, by our service, adding to the *accidental* glory of God. This is brought out in the Mass where, in the *Tersanctus*, it is declared that it is very meet, right, and our bounden duty that we should at all times and in all places give thanks unto God, and with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, laud and magnify God's glorious Name. On the other hand, if we are living in sin and are the servants of sin, we are really associated with Satan in dishonouring and blaspheming the Divine Majesty.

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The Mystery of the Redemption is, that God the Son suffered and died for us. Jesus Christ came to undo the work of sin, to repair the otherwise irreparable mischief wrought by evil. We ourselves sin, of our own free-will; the temptation to disobedience comes from the malice of the devil, but Satan cannot and does not make us sin. Temptation tests our virtue. The struggle goes on in the soul; man's free-will is the final judge. The intelligence and the will must act in every case of deliberate sin. The intelligence and will of Adam acting in disobedience to God's command produced that *Original sin* with which all the children of Adam have been tainted. Such are the awful consequences of sin. When man sins he turns from the Creator to the creature, and ceases to

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be a friend of God. Sin deprives the soul of God, for it is a contradiction of God. The life of God in the soul — the divine image, is vitiated by one act of mortal sin.

The Mystery of the Redemption is the undoing of the power of evil; a means by which fallen, sinful man is restored to God's favour and the divine likeness is repaired. The Cross of Calvary is a call to repentance. Repentance is a turning from sin to God. Having sinned, ere we can be justified or sanctified we must repent.

Now repentance is no easy matter. Like the labour of prayer, repentance is hard work, because the natural man is always opposed to God. The influence of sin is so delusive and so subtle and insidious. When sin lieth at the door, within the house there is corrupt desire,

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which may eat its way like the sleeping sickness, and little by little all that is crafty, wily, cunning, artful, and guileful possess us. We must always flee from sin. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.¹ Sin hardens the heart and it is possible for a man so to choose to live a life of sin, that at length it will be impossible for him to repent. It is *possible* for any man to become like Esau or Judas: good were it for that man if he had never been born.² To repent we must exercise our reason, our will, and our affections; we must, indeed, have another mind. To repent perfectly we must become like-minded with Christ. We must turn in on ourselves and turn ourselves out, for what concord hath Christ with Belial?³ None

¹ St. James iv, 7.

² St. Mark xiv, 21.

³ 2 Cor. iv, 15.

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at all. Judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? and if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?¹ Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.²

There are three parts to repentance: contrition, confession, and satisfaction or amendment. Three are the notable duties of the Christian: Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving; and there are three groups in the list of the seven deadly sins: Pride, Envy, and Anger; Covetousness; Lust, Sloth, and Gluttony, which may be conquered and subdued by the proper and faithful and persistent practice of these duties.

¹ St. Peter iv, 17, 18.

² Ibid. v, 6.

CHAPTER X

THE WAY OF CONTRITION

A broken and a contrite heart, O God, shalt Thou not despise. PSALM li, 17.

CONTRITION is a godly sorrow for sin, in union with the love of God. Suffering and sorrow are marks of the Lord Jesus. Jesus Christ upon the Cross of Calvary was the Great Penitent. He died of a broken heart. Our Vicar, He suffered for us; He died for us, that we might be forgiven. On the Cross He made by His own oblation of Himself, once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. By the merits and death

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of Jesus Christ, and through faith in His blood, we may obtain remission of our sins. How wonderful!

The Holy Ghost *convicts* us of sin. It is the influence of the Divine Spirit that moves us to penitence. Again, it is Divine Love that melts the stony heart and reveals to us the outrage which our sins do to the Divine Majesty, to the Love of God. What sinner can hear unmoved the story of the Cross, the story of the great Sacrifice in which all three Persons of the Blessed Trinity participated, but which reached its climax and was consummated in the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ? How should man's pride be crushed at the revelation of the Divine Humiliation. Christ pleased not Himself,¹ and pleasing one's self — pride, is the root of

¹ Rom. xv, 3.

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nearly every sin. We love our ease and the praise of men, while the way of the Cross is a way of pain and humiliation. The horror of the Passion we dislike to dwell upon. Yet it was all real. After the agony in Gethsemane, there followed the long hours of that dreadful night, the mocking, the scourging, the spitting, the journey to Calvary, and the unmitigated tortures of the crucifixion. The Hands, the Feet of Jesus were crushed and torn by the nails, the Head crowned with thorns — for us. His voice says to us, these Hands, these Feet, this Heart, were pierced for thee. Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow?¹

Contrition is what Saint Paul calls

¹ Lamentations i, 12.

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godly sorrow that worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of.¹ The sorrow of the world worketh death.² We see the contrast between these two kinds of sorrow in the repentance of Saint Peter and the remorse of Judas. Remorse may only result in despair. But contrition, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge. True contrition instantly creates a desire *to do something*; to make us careful, our consciences tender; it induces acknowledgment of our fault, indignation against ourselves, fear lest we should fall again, vehement desire to love God more, zeal for God, revenge — I beat myself black and blue lest,

¹ 2 Cor. vii, 10.

² Ibid. vii, 11.

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having preached to others I myself should be a castaway.¹

My God I am sorry that I have offended Thee, Who art so good. Forgive me for Jesus' sake, and I will try to sin no more.

¹ 1 Cor. ix, 27.

CHAPTER XI

THE WAY OF CONFESSION

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. I ST. JOHN i, 8, 9.

WITHOUT shedding of blood is no remission. Confession is *the blood of sorrow*, of that godly sorrow that worketh repentance to salvation. Repentance is not a matter of soft sayings, it has no painless method. Pain is one of the consequences of sin, and its endurance one of the conditions of pardon, through the Precious Blood. Christ suffered for our sins; we must suffer with Him.

The doctrine of Confession is so

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simple that it is strange any difficulty has ever been made about it. The Sacrament of Penance is the simple means provided by our Blessed Lord for obtaining forgiveness of sins committed after Baptism. It is no more difficult to teach this to a Confirmation class than it is to explain Regeneration, or Holy Orders. There is nothing difficult about it. Confession is a natural instinct of the human heart. Adam and Eve, the first sinners, made the first confession. Indeed the Bible and Prayer Book are full of this most comforting doctrine. The teaching of this doctrine is but the reiteration of the language of Holy Scripture, Ye know that ye were redeemed with the Precious Blood of Christ.¹ Every time Morning or Evening Prayer is read, we

¹ 1 St. Peter i, 18, 19.

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are told that God has given power and commandment to his ministers, to declare and pronounce to His people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins. Could words be plainer? Is there any obscurity about that declaration? In the Prayer Book Office for the Visitation of Prisoners, the man condemned to death for murder is exhorted to make a "particular confession of the sin for which he is condemned." The exhortations of Morning and Evening Prayer are a call to the souls self-condemned by unconfessed sins, oftentimes of equal or greater guilt, to seek salvation through the Precious Blood of Christ.

The express and particular power of absolving sinners from their sins resides in the priesthood of ministers of the apostolic succession. The power

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of Absolution is the conspicuous power singled out for special mention at the time of ordination. This is notable. In the Ordinal we read, "Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Priest in the Church of God. Whose sins thou dost forgive they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained, etc." The Bishop uses the same words Christ used in sending out the Apostles. They mean just what they appear to mean. The blackest sinner may receive the assurance of his pardon when repentant, the official release from the sentence of death under which he has passed.

But is it necessary to confess one's sins to a priest? The Church leaves the decision chiefly in the hands of the sinner. That confession of some sort is necessary, is certain. Whether a

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true confession is ever made in secret to God, is equally uncertain. The example of multitudes of holy men and women who have made sacramental and particular confession a habit of their life, cannot be without its special import. The Church has ever taught the power of Absolution. Self-examination before Communion is *required*, as we are reminded by the Catechism. Without the Godly counsel of a discreet minister of God's Word, there is often grave doubt in the minds of many persons whether or not they are in a state of grace. How many can themselves tell whether their sin or habits of sin are *venial* or *mortal*?

A hard and fast rule for all as to the frequency of Confession would be unwise. Many who are making a real effort to develop their spiritual life,

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both clergy and lay-folk, find monthly confession a great help. Some go even oftener. Some go once a year, at Easter only. Others mark the four Ember seasons; others the great festivals of Easter, Pentecost, and Christmas. That the practice of daily self-examination and frequent confession is practically helpful is the testimony of many. Those who frequent this sacrament must be warned of the necessity of *contrition*. One good confession a year is better than a dozen perfunctory acts of penitence. Go just as often as the Holy Spirit leads you, and in beginning the practice of this salutary means of grace, regulate your practice by the advice of your spiritual physician. The priest who fails to qualify himself to be a doctor of souls will never know one of the greatest

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joys of his share in the Eternal Priesthood of our Lord. The conversational will never serve for the confessional. The soul that has never experienced the joy of sacramental absolution has missed one of God's greatest gifts to man — missed its sensible realization.

The statement sometimes made, that *habitual confession* weakens the moral fibre and is injurious to the formation of Christian character, is contradicted by the actual experience of priests who act as confessors, as well as by their penitents. The public statement of a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons, made many years ago, ably bears this assertion out: "I hold that only those who have the experience are fit judges in the matter. I take my own case. I am over sixty years of age. For the past thirty years I have been going to

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confession, sometimes at long intervals, more frequently at shorter ones. I am a member of the medical profession, a Fellow of my college, a hospital surgeon, and have attained some repute. I judge myself to be about the last man to be infected with morbid influence. My wife and my grown-up children go to confession. They none of them seem to be affected with mental feebleness. A vast number of my friends, some in my own profession, others lawyers, others hard-headed men of business, go to confession, and I fail to see the dreadful deterioration which is set forth. I am an Alpine climber, and have the personal acquaintance of members of the finest race of men, the Swiss guides. They are the most devout men I know, and they all go to confession. The whole thing is a fig-

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ment of the brain unsupported by a single shred of evidence.”

As conservative a doctor of souls as the late Canon Liddon once wrote a friend of the author as follows:

CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD.

Dear Sir: — The question of private confession is left by our Prayer-book to the decision of the individual conscience, and it is difficult for any other person to settle, because it must be settled in view of a spiritual history known only to the soul itself, and to God.

I have myself used confession whenever I have needed it ever since 1847, and have never regretted it. I think it braces the soul as nothing else does, while the absolution that follows is a more direct and peremptory application of the Absolving Power left by our Lord to this Church, than the more general formulæ of the Daily and Communion Services.

I have felt too, as regards my own case, that Bishop Butler's general doctrine about the "safer" course in questions of conduct points distinctly to the practice.

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Perhaps, too, it ought to be considered that there is some risk in giving up any religious practice which has once been adopted.

In saying this, I do not forget that confession is medicine and not food, and is to be used when needed, and not as merely a matter of periodical propriety, when the conscience feels that no need exists. But there is risk, when a person has once used confession, in neglecting to use it if the conscience suggests it.

I have a true affection for —, whose language you quote, but should *doubt whether he has ever used confession in his life; and when this is the case, a man can only look at the question from one side, and make a priori guesses as to what may happen in a contingency of which he has no practical knowledge.*

Notwithstanding the finiteness and imperfections of the earthly minister, and the omniscience and tenderness of our great High Priest in Heaven, the former does, *by Christ's Commission, help us, if we will, to repent and make a great moral effort, which is not made so easily when we are alone.*

* * * * *

Ever yours, H. P. LIDDON.

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This letter was in reply to one stating that the writer had been taught as a youth to use Confession, but that for a long time he had neglected its use: also quoting one whose language had suggested that it was sufficient to confess our sins to our Great High Priest in Heaven, without confessing them to an earthly priest as well.

A brilliant young officer of the French army once called upon Fenelon, the saintly Archbishop of Cambrai. "Monseigneur," said he, "within a few hours I shall face the enemy. Before the battle I am rather inclined to confess my sins to you; but I should first like to hear from your lips the proofs which establish the divinity of confession." "Very well," said the affable prelate, "I am willing. As it is natural, however, in all matters to take the shortest

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road, confess yourself first, and perhaps after that you may let me off some of the proofs." "But," stammered his client, "the process is unscientific, if one has to practice confession in order to know the motives for confessing." "That may be all well enough," replied the Archbishop, "but in practice you will find the process to be of unquestionable efficacy. Yield then to my age and experience, if not to your own conviction, and in case, when you have done, you relieve me from the task of arguing the question, we shall have saved two hours, which we owe, you to France, and I to the Church." Needless to say, the confession was made.

And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell *me* now what thou hast

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done; hide it not from me. ¹ Sinners,
you may *know* that you are forgiven.
Satan always

“ trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees.”

O God, show me my sin. O God, make
me sorry for my sin. O God, forgive
me my sin.

NOTE. — Seekers after truth may profit by reading Exodus xxxii, 8; Levit. v, 5; Psalm xxxii, 5; Levit. xvi, 21; xxvi, 40; Numbers v, 7; Job xxxi, 33; St. John xx, 23; Prov. xxviii, 13; St. James v, 16; Acts xix, 18.

¹ Joshua vii, 19.

CHAPTER XII

THE WAY OF AMENDMENT: SATISFACTION AND REPARATION

Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? ACTS ix, 66.

THE third part of repentance is amendment — sometimes called satisfaction. In the very act of confession we have performed a duty which has become imperative to our own sense of justice, we have acknowledged our guilt, we have unburdened our conscience, we have gained self-knowledge. Now we are prepared to be more watchful over our lives, we feel better prepared to meet the dangers put in our way by our adversary. We have

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learned that our Lord's mercy extends until seventy times seven and yet we have put a check upon our laxity.

Then there has sprung up within us a desire to endure ourselves some suffering for our sin; a desire to perform some act of loving service to God as an earnest of our contrition; and a willingness to expiate, in some way, part of the *consequences* of our sin. We are only too well aware that Jesus only could make satisfaction for our sins; that the Sacrifice of Calvary was a full, perfect, and complete satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. We know that He died that we might be forgiven, that He is our Peace. But a Christian, when he learns to love his Lord, desires to help bear His Cross, and with desire, desires like St. Paul, to fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in his

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flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church.¹ We sometimes hurt and wound those we love here, and when we are sorry our first thought is, what can I do to show that I am sorry? Compare the sorrow sometimes felt when we have come to a realization of wrong done to an earthly friend, with the debt we owe to the loving God whose patience is the patience of the Eternal—and our hearts fail us. What reward shall I give unto the Lord for all the benefits that he hath done unto me?² A little child grieves his mother's love and brings to her a wild-flower from the field, to show her he is sorry. How often that or something similar has happened. Contrition is a sorrow that stays by you, *all your life long*. You know that you have been reconciled,

¹ Col. i, 25.

² Psalm cxvi, 11.

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forgiven. The shame and guilt of your sin have been taken away, you have been healed of your sickness, but you must do your penance — in some way make your own reparation, take up thy bed, and go thy way.¹ I have sinned, and Jesus has made satisfaction for my sin; we say with Job, what shall I do unto Thee, O thou preserver of men?²

Often has the opportunity of making reparation or restitution to one we have injured been lost, or made impossible by death. Then perhaps nothing remains for us but some special observance of one or more of the three notable duties, prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. It is in the practice of penance, in making *our* acts of satisfaction or reparation, that we realize the sweetness of ministering to Christ — we find

¹ St. Mark ii, 11.

² Job vii, 20.

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Him beneath the beggar's rags or in some sick child: Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.¹ God expects us to do what we can. Amendment is love in action.

¹ St. Matt. xxv, 40.

CHAPTER XIII

THE WAY OF PERSEVERANCE

He that endureth to the end shall be saved. ST.
MATT. x, 22.

THE way of the Holy Cross is straight and narrow; it is the way of sacrifice. It is a way that taxes one's endurance, and that requires diligence and perseverance to reach the end. Endurance — of trial and temptation, of sorrow and pain, of hope deferred. Diligence — constant carefulness, and attention, and earnest effort, persistent exertion of body and mind; industry, assiduity. We must always be choosing the way of the Cross instead of an easier way. Perseverance is persistence.

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He that endureth to the end shall be saved.¹ Christ put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.² He came to do His Father's will: which to Him was meat and drink. On the Cross He was able to say, It is finished.³ Even

“The gray-haired saint may fall at last,” so our daily prayer must be for *the grace of perseverance*. “Perfection consists not in doing extraordinary things, but in doing ordinary things extraordinarily well.” The dull routine and monotony of life sometimes are apt to cloud the spiritual faculties, but he will best find God who does his daily duty in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call him. A Christian is like the centurion — he is a man under authority. He is a steward of

¹ St. Matt. x, 22.

² Heb. ix, 26.

³ St. John xix, 30.

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talents committed to him. He must himself earn their product. We have the assurance of daily strength for daily needs, As thy days so shall thy strength be.¹ "Onward, ever onward," must be our daily progress. As the Christian goes on he should daily draw nearer to his home. The progress of life is from grace to glory; glory will be the crown of grace. Life at its best is short, but as it passes, the soul that is seeking righteousness will find Jesus in many a trysting place. The spirit of Christ was given us at our Baptism: it has been renewed in us in every good Communion. In our moments of greatest weakness and direst need He strengthens us. God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the

¹ Deut. xxxiii, 25.

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weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.¹

Saint Augustine says that the life of a perfect Christian is nothing else than the going ever forward in the practice of virtue, under the impulse of holy aspirations. Our first efforts are those of beginners, we travel along the *purgative* way; we are at war with our passions and we are weak in virtue. All our time is occupied in purifying ourselves from habits of sin, and little by little we reach the second stage and enter upon the *illuminative* way, we learn to persevere courageously; Faith, Hope and Love become active principles in our daily conduct; we find that we have gained control over many of our evil habits. Lastly, the Christian enters into the *unitive* way in which

¹ 1 Cor. i, 27.

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he realizes more and more fully his union with God and finds himself master of himself. Saint Thomas Aquinas illustrates this same progress by comparing it with the growth of the human body, infancy, youth, and manhood, the development taking place gradually and almost imperceptibly. "So true is it, that Christian perfection knows no halting-place, and that he is the most perfect who ever aspires to greater perfection." And St. Bernard says, "Perfection rightly understood is nothing else than untiring endeavour to improve, a ceaseless striving after perfection."

CHAPTER XIV

THE WAY OF MYSTERY

The mystery of godliness. 1 ST. TIM. iii, 16.

SAINTE PAUL uses the word mystery as meaning a truth which was at first hidden and afterwards revealed. Mystery is fact translated into the language of Eternity. The word comes from meaning "to be shut or closed." Life is a mystery; so is death; so is godliness; so is the life of a Christian. The mystery of Godliness is a divine paradox. Each discovery opens up a new mystery. Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.¹ Such

¹ 1 Cor. xiii, 12.

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shall be our ultimate understanding of hidden things.

Regeneration is a mystery. We must all be born again. But the wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.¹ Regeneration is not to be confused with Conversion. The Church teaches, as did our Lord, the necessity of conversion also. Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of heaven.² Does not our conversion really begin at our baptism, and is not conversion a succession of acts of the will, by which the heart turns again and again to God, finding, following, keeping, struggling, and ever finding God

¹ St. John iii, 8.

² St. Matt. xviii, 3.

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sure to bless? The fatherhood of God is best appreciated in this process of conversion. We soon find that ours is that frail human nature which cannot always stand upright,¹ and that we are sore let and hindered in running the race that is set before us.² But as we fall we learn that our heavenly Father pities us,³ that His mercy is from everlasting,⁴ as again and again He grants us that strength and protection which supports us in all dangers, and carries us through all temptations.⁵ We are sealed with the Christian character. We are signed with the Cross at our baptism. The character of a soldier of the Cross is impressed upon us, only more deeply, at our Confirmation. We should always

¹ Collect IV Epiphany. ³ Psalm ciii, 13.

² Collect IV Advent. ⁴ Ibid. ciii, 17.

⁵ Collect, Epiphany.

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remember our sacramental character. Each soul is a coin in the kingdom of Jesus Christ. At the end we shall be saved if we bear in our bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus.¹ This is the language of mystery; we learn to interpret it ourselves, with advancing years.

So with the mystery of the Precious Blood, sprinkled in absolution upon the soul of the penitent. A soul may become dead in trespasses and sin.² But the Saviour came to seek and to save that which was lost;³ to raise the dead. The house is swept for the lost coin.⁴ Come from the four winds, O Breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live.⁵ Father, Son and Holy Spirit combine in the effort to

¹ Cal. i, 17.

³ St. Luke xix, 10.

² Ephes. ii, 1.

⁴ St. Luke xv.

⁵ Ezek. xvii.

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restore the wanderer, and in Heaven itself there is joy over one sinner that repenteth.¹ What divine extravagance there is in the wonderful hope for sinners held out in our Lord's words, Until seventy times seven.² Pardon through the Precious Blood is a great mystery, but it is a fact.

The Catholic Religion is a religion of mystery. The Mystery of the Incarnation, the mystery of iniquity,³ the Mystery of the Redemption, the Mystery of the Blessed Trinity, the mystery of the New Birth, the mystery of the Real Presence — all beyond the ken of man. So is the mystery of God Eternal — the only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.⁴

¹ St. Luke xv, 10.

³ 2 Thess. ii, 7.

² St. Matt. xviii, 22.

⁴ St. John i, 18.

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So is the Mystery of Godliness great. The life of a Christian as it ought to be, is a life that is itself a living sermon, preaching fully the Word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.¹ Ye are complete in Him² — in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.³ As

¹ Col. i, 25-29.

² Col. ii, 10.

³ Col. ii, 3.

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we go on in the Christian life, divine mysteries become unfolded to us like the petals of a beautiful flower. The way of mystery is like a path through a tropical forest; on every side are orchids and rare plants, beautiful and fragrant.

All the ceremonial or ritual life of the Church is mystical. Each act of symbolism has its especial significance. *It is the outward expression of love.* As Faith without works is dead,¹ so ceremonial without love is dead, also. As our sense of the reality of the efficacy of sacraments becomes quickened, the faculty of worship is aroused, and an outlet is sought through which we can offer our homage to God. "Ritual is the vestment of sacramental faith." Were ceremonial practised for any other purpose than the glory and

¹ St. James ii, 20.

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honour of God, *e.g.*, for the mere edification of the faithful, it might serve a purpose, but it would have no permanency, because its end would be merely human. Ceremonial has three great functions or aspects: it is a sacrifice, a safeguard, and a lesson.¹ As a sacrifice, every function we possess, both of body and spirit, is pressed into service. As a safeguard, ceremonial is for the protection of the ancient faith, and it is best rendered where the hidden worship of the human heart is deepest. And as to its instructive function, ceremonial would teach all the senses what the voice teaches through the ear; through it even infants may learn something about the things of God. Ceremonial has always been an expression of faith and love, and it consecrates

¹ See Essay on Ceremonial by T. H. Passmore.

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all that is fair and beautiful, the best creations of every craft and talent and art, to the service of the King. The text with which we are all so familiar, O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,¹ more adequately and accurately translated is, O worship the Lord in beautiful garments.

¹ Psalms xcvi, 9.

CHAPTER XV

THE WAY FOR EVERY DAY

Continuing daily with one accord. ACTS ii, 46.

SO the soul goes on to God. The life of a Christian is a life of sacramental progress. It is a life of faith, of hope, and of love. It is a life of prayer and service. It is a life of contrition. It is a life of work. It is a life in which, as one goes along every day, he ascends the ladder of the spiritual life, through purgation to illumination and so onward, until he reaches the unitive way and becomes holy and perfect even as his Father in Heaven is perfect.

It is a life that never will be free

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from the necessities of its earthly condition or the requirements of its frail humanity. There will be times of sickness, when recourse to the tribunal of penance will provide the medicine by which the soul may be healed. There will be constant need of daily bread, food for the struggle, and that food will always be found in the Bread of the Sacrament. In the most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, will be found the never-failing measure of meal, the cruse of oil that is never dried up, the well of living water of life to be freely drunk. Whoso eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise them up at the last day.¹

Grace for every need, strength for the day, rest for the night, the companion-

¹ St. John vi, 54.

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ship of saints and angels — all this and more awaits him who will try to pattern his life after the model of the life of Jesus our Lord.

The Catholic Religion is not for one nation or people. It is Catholic because, while never changing, it accommodates itself to every people, nation, and language; it is old yet ever new. Its faith is a faith grounded on eternal facts. Christ died for all. His body spiritual can comprehend literally all sorts and conditions of men. The Catholic Religion *assures* men of their ultimate salvation, provided they walk in the ways of truth and study the walls of Zion.

The Catholic Church is a living' and ever tender mother, who cares for her children day and night, in sickness and in health, for better, for worse, for

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richer, for poorer, from the cradle to the grave. How great, then, should be the love and devotion of the child for that patient mother. As a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee, and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.¹

This is the way for every day. Every day consecrated to God, begun and ended with prayer and praise. Every night finding the pilgrim,

“A day’s march nearer home,”

until the days of his pilgrimage are ended and he finds himself at the gate of the City Beautiful. The daily life of a Christian must be a life in which the notable duties of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving each have their respective

¹ Isaiah lxii, 5.

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and proportionate place. It must be a life in which the Cross of Christ is daily borne. It must be a life with a definite purpose, striving after the realization of a true vocation. The daily question, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? shall receive its answer. It must be a life free from extravagances and excesses of every sort. Daily self-examination and acts of love and contrition mark the life of a Christian.

The Bible should be the best known and the best loved book in every household. There is a beauty, a simplicity and a grandeur about the language of Holy Writ which never lose their subtle charm, which again and anon enthrall the ear and delight the soul. Thy word is a lantern unto my feet: and a light unto my paths.¹ Lord, what love have

¹ Psalm cxix, 105.

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I unto Thy law: all the day long is my study in it.¹

Wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.² The life of a Christian will be an Eucharistic life. At the Altar we partake of the worthiness of Jesus present in His Blessed Sacrament, to be our food and stay. As that life goes on we may learn at least to say, This shall be my rest for ever: here will I dwell for I have a delight therein.³ No Sunday, no holy day, will pass without finding the traveller stopping at that Inn, where he shall find food and refreshment, and where, by renewed communion with his Saviour, he shall enter more and more into the joy of his Lord. One good communion is the best

¹ Ibid. cxix, 97.

² St. Matt. xxix, 28.

³ Psalm cxxxii, 15.

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preparation for the next. Weekly communion is found to be a practice within the compass of many souls. Try it. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.¹ For righteousness read *Jesus*. Under proper direction, daily communion during a season like Lent is quite permissible as well as at other times. Anniversaries and holy days might well be so observed. We yet have to learn that holy days are *Holy days of obligation* to be at least present at Mass.

Little by little a life lived so, will develop and expand until at length it approaches the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.² Prayer will be a delight to us. Fasting and abstinence will no longer be obsolete

¹ St. Matt. v, 6.

² Ephes. iv, 13.

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words, and almsgiving will exact from us the question, not how little, but how much can I give? We adorn our houses with a lavish hand when we have means, while God's house is often bare and cold. Learn to make reparation to God by gifts of Love.

“There was a man, some say that he was mad,
The more he gave away the more he had.”

Pray for such madness, it is divine. Give with your heart, and so minister to your self, your neighbour, and to Him who had not where to lay His head.

The way for every day is a way lived in the daily, perpetual Presence of God — the loving God who can do no evil thing — Who is ever speaking to His children and saying, I have covered thee in the shadow of My hand,¹ and,

¹ Isa. li, 16.

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I will go before you¹ and make the crooked places straight, I will break in pieces the doors of brass and will cut in sunder the bars of iron: and I will give thee treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.²

¹ St. Matt. xxvi, 32.

² Isa. xlv, 2, 3.

CHAPTER XVI

THE CROWN

Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. REV. iii, 11.

THERE are two Greek words in the New Testament having crown for their English equivalent — *diadema* and *stephanos*. The diadem was a band or fillet of blue worked with white, which went around the tiara of the kings of Persia; in other words, *the kingly crown*. The *stephanos* was the crown or wreath awarded the victor in the public games — *the palma, or garland*, given as a prize, the wearing of which denoted a conqueror. It is the *stephanos*, the crown of glory and

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honour, that the Christian is warned not to lose. . We are to hold fast to that which we have won after many a hard-fought fight against our spiritual foes. We are so to run the race that is set before us, that we may at last obtain the prize. And what a prize! Not a garland of laurel or of olive, not a material wreath of golden leaves, but a crown that shall never perish, the glorious lustre of which shall never fade or grow dim. Saint Paul was caught up to the third heaven and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. *We* are to be the joy and crown of all saints who have gone before. They who succeed in overcoming the world shall receive the crown of righteousness and glory, the crown of deathless life. To win the crown we must bear the Cross in ordi-

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nary life, not a Cross of our choosing, but in whatever way and of whatever weight God pleases. He alone knows our strength and our weakness. Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. . . . And if a man strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully. . . . Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed.¹

Heaven is the vision of God; it is where God is. Heaven begins here as we come to see Him and know Him for ourselves. He reveals Himself to us severally. As we bear the fruit of good works in our life here, we glorify God, and win that joy no man taketh from us. Amid sorrow and trial and difficulty we take courage as we see the

¹ ii S. Tim. 11, 3, 5, 15.

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face of the first martyr Stephen, as it had been the face of an angel.¹ In the hour of temptation we recall that when the Captain of our salvation was tempted, angels came and ministered unto Him.² Surely there are times in the experience of every human life when one knows that he has been succoured by those who do always behold the Father's Face. The saints and holy angels who are our unseen companions now, a great cloud of witnesses,³ shall continue to be our friends in the life of the world to come. Our eyes shall see the King in His beauty.⁴ Sorrow and pain, sickness and death, shall be no more, and we shall walk the streets of the celestial country, clothed in white raiment, which is the

¹ Acts vi, 15.

³ Heb. xii, 1.

² St. Matt. iv, 11.

⁴ Isaiah xxxiii, 17.

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righteousness of saints.¹ Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the City.²

“I seek for Jesus, in repose
When round my heart its chambers close;
Abroad, and when I shut the door,
I long for Jesus evermore.
With Mary in the morning gloom
I seek for Jesus at the tomb:
For Him with love’s most earnest cry
I seek with heart and not with eye.”

¹ Rev. xix, 8.

² Rev. xxii, 14.

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THE HOLY NAME

“JESUS, altogether lovely,
Thy Name is the only true prayer;
There is no adding to it.

JESUS,
my hand was held by Thee,
then is my hand Thy Hand.
In handling, touching, writing, working, nurs-
ing, distributing,
keep my hand sacred as Thy Hand.

JESUS,
my lips have tasted Thee,
then are my lips Thy lips.
In speaking, praying teaching, eating, breath-
ing, reading, singing,
keep my lips sacred as Thy lips.

JESUS,
let this be the day without sin,
a day like one of Thy days.
Let this day Salvation come to me.
Let the beginning and the end be
JESUS!”

— *By a Religious.*

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THE EMERALD

“THE gem, to which the artist did entrust,
That Face which now outshines the Cherubim,
Gave up full willingly its emerald dust,
To take Christ’s likeness, to make room for
Him.

So must it be, if thou wouldst bear about
Thy Lord — thy shining surface must be
lowered,

Thy goodly prominence be chipt and scored,
Till those deep scars have brought the fea-
tures out:

Sharp be the stroke and true, make no com-
plaints;

For heavenly lines thou givest earthy grit.

But oh, how oft our coward spirit faints,

When we are called our jewels to submit

To this keen graver, which so oft has writ

The Saviour’s image on His wounded saints.”

— *Charles Tennyson Turner.*

THE LIFE OF A CHRISTIAN

THE HOLY COMMUNION

O happy Flowers! O happy Flowers!
How quietly for hours and hours,
In dead of night, in cheerful day,
Close to my own dear Lord you stay,
Until you gently fade away.
O happy flowers! What would I give
In yon sweet place all day to live,
And then to die, my service o'er,
Softly, as you do, at His door?

O happy Lights! O happy Lights!
Watching my Jesus livelong nights;
How close you cluster round His throne,
Dying so meekly one by one,
As each its faithful watch has done.
Could I with you but take my turn,
And burn with love of Him, and burn
Till love had wasted me like you,
Sweet Lights! What better could I do?

O happy Pyx! O happy Pyx!
Where Jesus doth His Dwelling fix;
O little palace! dear and bright,
Where He, Who is the world's true Light,

THE CROWN

Spends all the day, and stays all night,
Ah! if my heart could only be
A little home for Him like thee,
Such fires my happy soul would move,
I could not help but die of love!

O Pyx, and Lights, and Flowers! but I
Through envy of you will not die!
Nay, happy things! what will you do,
Since I am better off than you,
The whole day long, the whole night thro' ?
For JESUS gives Himself to me,
So sweetly and so utterly,
By rights long since I should have died,
For love of Jesus Crucified.

My happy Soul! my happy Soul!
How shall I then my love control?
O sweet Communion! Feast of bliss!
When the dear Host my tongue doth kiss,
What happiness is like to this?
Oh, Heaven, I think, must be alway
Quite like a First Communion Day,
With love so sweet and joy so strange —
Only that Heaven will never change!

— *F. W. Faber.*

THE LIFE OF A CHRISTIAN

HYMN

My Lord, my Master, at Thy Feet adoring,
I see Thee bowed beneath Thy load of woe;
For me, a sinner, is Thy Life-Blood pouring;
For thee, my Saviour, scarce my tears will
flow.

Thine own disciple to the Jews has sold Thee,
With Friendship's kiss and loyal word he
came;
How oft of fruitful love my lips have told Thee,
While Thou hast seen my falsehood and my
shame.

With taunts and scoffs they mock what seems
Thy weakness,
With blows and outrage adding pain to pain;
Thou art unmoved and steadfast in Thy meek-
ness;
When I am wrong'd how quickly I complain!

My Lord, my Saviour, when I see Thee wearing
Upon Thy bleeding brow the crown of thorn,
Shall I for pleasure live, or shrink from bearing
Whate'er my lot may be of pain or scorn?

THE CROWN

O Victim of Thy love! O pangs most healing!
O saving Death! O wounds that I adore!
O shame most glorious! Christ, before Thee
kneeling
I pray Thee keep me Thine for evermore.
— *Anonymous.*

VISION OF THE WOUNDS

“Two Hands have haunted me for days,
Two Hands of slender shape,
All crushed and torn, as in the press
Is bruised the purple grape;
At work or meals, at prayer or play,
The mangled Palms I see;
And a plaintive Voice keeps whispering,
‘These Hands were pierced for thee.’
For me, sweet LORD, for me?
Yea, even so, ungrateful one,
These Hands were pierced for thee!”

“Through toil and dangers pressing on,
As through a fiery flood,
Two tender Feet beside my own,
Mark every step with blood;
The swollen Veins, so rent with nails,
It breaks my heart to see,

THE LIFE OF A CHRISTIAN

While the same Voice cries out afresh,
‘These Feet were pierced for thee!’
For me, dear CHRIST, for me?
‘Yea, even so, rebellious flesh,
These Feet were pierced for thee.’

“As on we journey to the close,
These wounded Feet and mine,
Distincter still the Vision grows,
And more and more Divine;
For in my guide’s wide-open side,
The cloven Heart I see,
And the tender Voice sobs like a psalm,
‘This heart was pierced for thee!’
For me, great GOD, for me?
‘Yea, enter in, my love, my lamb,
This Heart was pierced for thee.’”

— *Anonymous.*

THIS IS PEACE

“To conquer love of self and lust of life;
To tear deep-rooted passion from the breast;
To still the inward strife;
To lay up lasting treasure
Of perfect service rendered, duties done
In charity, soft speech and stainless days:

THE CROWN

These riches shall not fade away in life,
Nor any death dispraise."

— *Sir Edwin Arnold.*

BE STRONG

Be strong! We are not here to play, to dream,
to drift.

We have hard work to do, and loads to lift;
Shun not the struggle; face it. 'Tis God's gift:
Be strong!

Say not the days are evil, — Who's to blame?
And fold the hands and acquiesce — O shame!
Stand up, speak out, and bravely, in God's name:
Be strong!

It matters not how deep entrenched the wrong,
How hard the battle goes, the day how long;
Faint not, fight on!
To-morrow comes the song.
— *Maltbie W. Babcock.*



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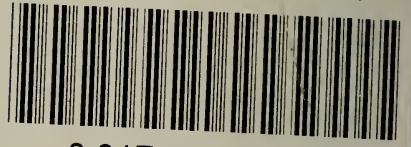
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